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## FROM FIELD AND STUDY

**White Ibis at Fremantle.**—On January 7, 1956, my brother Waverney and I made our first acquaintance with the White Ibis (*Threskiornis aethiopica*), when a single bird was seen in the company of several Straw-necked Ibis at Bibra Lake, six miles east of Fremantle. The ibis were feeding along the eastern shore of the lake. We again observed the ibis on February 4.

—JULIAN R. FORD, Fremantle.

**Wambenger (*Phascogale penicillata*) at Coolup.**—On December 19, 1955, Mr. J. D. Cox of Coolup brought me a Wambenger which his cat had caught. He stated that this was the first specimen he had seen though he had lived at Arthgarven, Coolup, for 40 odd years and now farmed part of the original property. The farm is situated between the South-West Highway and the Murray River, about 5 miles south of Pinjarra. Most other old residents of the districts whom I have contacted have never noted the animal here, but T. M. Smith, of West Coolup, recalled seeing one about 15 years ago. J. D. Cox's specimen was a male; weight 5 $\frac{3}{4}$  oz.; testis, 7.3 x 5.3 mm.; stomach, practically empty but contained some small fragments of a gecko (*Phyllodactylus* sp.) and remains of at least two small insects, one a beetle.

—ANGUS ROBINSON, "Yanjettec," Coolup.

**Crested Pigeon at Shackleton.**—A Crested Pigeon (*Ocyphaps lophotes*) has appeared in this district, considerably south of its recorded range. The bird first appeared at a farm near Kokerbin Hill, 8 miles north-west of Shackleton. After a few weeks it disappeared and was next seen at our farm, which is 6 miles north-east of Shackleton on May 20, 1956. The stiff, erect crest, deep coral pink legs, and characteristic habit of cocking its tail on alighting positively identify the bird.

Having no companions among the wild birds this pigeon often lingers around our poultry. On occasions it feeds on wheat on the ground with the fowls. It is remarkably tame and is easily approached. Often attention is drawn to it by the loud whirring noise of its wings when it takes flight.

—DIGBY DARLINGTON, Shackleton.

**Spider Predator on a Vertebrate.**—On February 20, 1955, about half way between Morawa and Pintharuka, a specimen of the Theraphosid spider *Selenocosmia crassipes* (Koch) was observed to have at the bottom of its burrow a malodorous, mutilated specimen of a frog. It is of interest that in some parts of the world Theraphosids are called "Bird-eating Spiders". The frog was partly bound up with web and after this was removed it was possible to measure and identify the specimen. It was identified as *Helioporus centralis* Parker and it measured approximately 3.20 cm. The spider was not grossly larger than the prey, measuring 4.30 cm. from the front of the chelicerae to the tip of the abdomen, excluding the spinnerets. Presumably the spider killed the frog outside the burrow since there was no damage to the flimsy silk lining, which damage would have undoubtedly occurred if the prey had struggled within the burrow. Several days before the above discovery there had been in the area a thunderstorm with heavy rain, after which many frogs surfaced and formed breeding congresses in nearby creeks. It is believed that the only other record of an Australian spider feeding on frogs is the observation of Mrs. L. Watson (reported in McKeown's book "Australian Spiders", 1952, Angus and Robertson) of *Atrax formidabilis* (Rainbow), the tree funnel-web spider, feeding on the tree frog *Hyla caerulea* (Shaw). Although terrestrial insects form the main part of the diet of *S. crassipes* the above record shows that it can and actually does occasionally take vertebrate prey.

—BARBARA YORK MAIN and A. R. MAIN,  
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**Unusual Cuckoo Hosts.**—When Mr. I. C. Carnaby and I were bird observing at Tunnel Creek on Turee Station, north of the Ashburton River, on July 31, 1955, we came across a rarely recorded instance of the Black-eared Cuckoo (*Misocalius osculans*) parasitising the Yellow-tailed Thornbill (*Acanthiza chrysorrhoa*). The nest was situated in a clump of mistletoe on a Casuarina and contained two eggs of the thornbill and one of the cuckoo. The eggs of the thornbill were typical in colour and measured 16.0 x 12.1 mm. and 16.1 x 11.7 mm. The cuckoo's egg was a deep chocolate, measuring 19.2 x 14.5 mm. The only previous example of this combination was reported from Central Australia and details are given by A. J. North (*Nests and Eggs*, vol. 3, 1912, p. 15).

On the following day, August 1, we found a nest of the Banded Whiteface (*Aphelocephala nigricincta*) on the Turner Flats, a few miles south-west of the Mulgool Station homestead. This nest, which was situated in a wax-bush approximately 18 in. above the ground,